

PACE tools: learning from the National Framework

'The National Framework – guidance and support for hr professionals' in Local government, was produced in 2005 to help local authorities develop and use high quality, fit for purpose, behavioural (competency) criteria. Such criteria would then provide a common focus for all people management activities, from attracting job applicants to rewarding performance.

During the years we were supporting users of the national framework we became aware that:

- organisations over relied on the criteria to address performance
- not all influences in situations were being accounted for when addressing performance
- the model behind the framework could help avoid waste and enhance performance

Organisations over relied on the criteria to address performance

Criteria must only contain behaviours that fit the expectations and work conditions of the organisation. Too often, competencies were found to contain behaviours that did not match organisational goals and values and/or were not supported by work conditions.

Individuals are commonly trained in new ways of working and returned to situations where systems, processes and cultures neither support nor reward the new style of working. Leadership training and management training, while well intended, are often and inevitably ineffective and wasted.

Similarly, there is no point designing performance reviews and training individuals to use them if the criteria at their core do not account for the organisational influences that affect performance.

Not all influences in situations were accounted for when addressing performance

Mismatches between expectations and work conditions were contributing to performance issues. Underperformance, stress and disengagement were just a few of the signs that individuals were struggling with this mismatch.

Outcomes and behaviours represent performance and the performance achieved may or may not be the performance an organisation wants – depending on how well an organisation's expectations its work conditions and its people support expected performance..

The model behind the framework could help avoid waste and enhance performance

The model behind the national framework was developed to account for and help manage all influences on performance. These influences (Expectations, Work conditions and Individuals' characteristics) feature in all situations, from small tasks to managing whole organisations.

Interventions that do not account for these influences might address unwanted behaviour and poor outputs but these are only the symptoms of performance issues. This wastes resources and diverts attention away from the causes of performance issues and away from achieving lasting solutions to performance issues.

Call to action

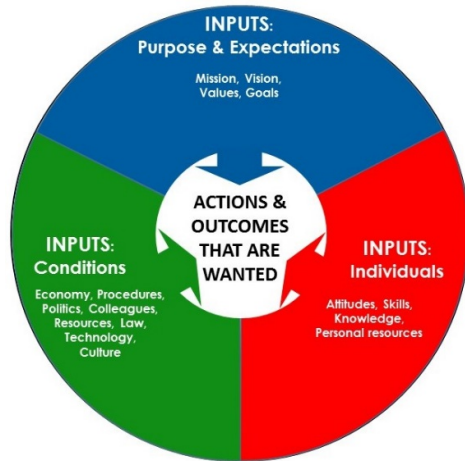
The LGA is inviting organisations to help test and refine new tools based on what we have learned.

Materials and support will be provided throughout the pilot via the web and face-to-face. The pilot is running into 2017 and is managed by Steve Whiddett. Steve was involved in developing the original national framework material, supporting its users and in originating and evolving the model and tools.

The PACE model and tools

Actions (behaviours) and outcomes are key tools in managing situations but they should not be the primary focus. When performance is not as expected, actions and outcomes indicate there is a problem. To resolve the problem, we need to look at the whole situation to identify, separate and address the causes of poor performance as well as their symptoms.

The model



Any situation contains three sets of inputs:

- Purpose & Expectations
- Work Conditions, and one or more
- Individuals

Situations also feature two outputs:

- Actions (behaviour) and
- Outcomes (deliverables)

When the inputs support each other they help create the actions and outcomes that we want.

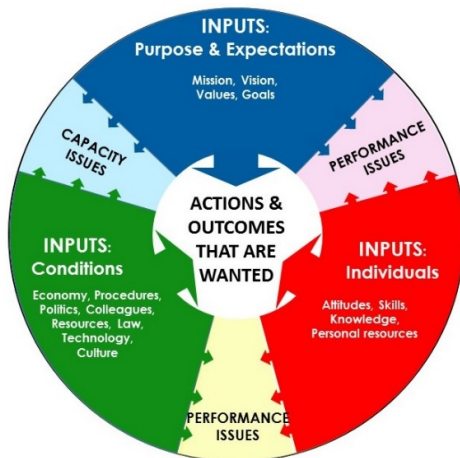
When inputs do not support each other they create capacity and performance issues.

Capacity issues limit what can be achieved.

Performance issues further limit what can be achieved by limiting how much of the capacity Individuals can deliver.

Performance issues become evident in actions and outcomes that do not contribute to expectations, i.e. diverting attention and effort away from expectations.

Effective performance management requires a combination of reducing capacity issues and reducing actions and outcomes that do not contribute to expectations.



The PACE tools

The PACE tools are based on this model and help manage performance. The model and tools can be scaled to manage performance in: small day-to-day situations; projects and interventions; and, long term strategic situations.

By combining sets of tools, it is possible to cover any aspect of organisational design, development or change. The pilot project focuses on developing and enhancing capacity and enhancing performance; resulting in culture change, improved performance management and greater organisational efficiency.